

Accreditation and Certification

An organisation becomes certified to one or more standard(s), such as the following management system standards, to enable the organisation to more effectively market its products and/or services.

ISO 9001	Quality Management System (QMS)
ISO 14001	Environmental Management System (EMS)
ISO 22301	Business Continuity Management System (BCMS)
ISO/IEC 27001	Information Security Management System (ISMS)
ISO 37001	Anti-Bribery Management System (ABMS)
ISO 45001	Occupational Health and Safety Management System (OHSMS)

Virtually all tenders and framework agreements, and many organisations, particularly public sector, require or prefer suppliers to be certified to appropriate standards. If your organisation possesses, or intends to pursue, certification to a standard, you should be aware of the system of accreditation and certification, to ensure that you possess or achieve a valid, recognised certification.

International and National Standards

International standards are produced by international standards organisations, such as the following.

ISO (International Organization for Standardization) – www.iso.org
IEC (International Electrotechnical Commission) – www.iec.ch
ITU (International Telecommunications Union) – www.itu.int
IEEE (Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers) – www.ieee.org
CEN (European Committee for Standardization) – www.cen.eu
CENELEC (European Committee for Electrotechnical Standardization) – www.cenelec.eu
ETSI (European Telecommunications Standards Institute) – www.etsi.org

The international standards organisations are membership organisations. Each member is a national standards organisation, such as the following.

BSI (British Standards Institute) – www.bsigroup.com
ANSI (American National Standards Institute) – www.ansi.org
DIN (Deutsches Institut für Normung) – www.din.de

Certification

A Conformity and Assessment Body (CAB) assesses an organisation and **Certifies** that it conforms to a (management system) standard. The CAB awards a **Certificate** to the organisation stating that it is **Certified** to that standard. The CAB must maintain a Register of the **Certifications** it awards to organisations.

NOTE A CAB may also be referred to as a Certification Body (CB) or a Registrar.
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The CAB should be **Accredited** to certify to the standard.

Accreditation

The following international organisations complement the international standards organisations.

ILAC (International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation) – www.ilac.org
IAF (International Accreditation Forum) – www.iaf.nu

ILAC and IAF are membership organisations, with two types of members. The first is an Accreditation Body (AB). The second is a Regional Association (of Accreditation Bodies). [These are detailed later.] Member ABs of **ILAC accredit Laboratories** to perform tests. Member ABs of **IAF accredit organisations, known as a Conformity Assessment Bodies**, to certify that organisations conform to standards. Member ABs participate in the IAF MLA and ILAC MRA, a Multi-Lateral Recognition Agreement, where each recognises the equivalence of other participants' accreditations to their own.

UKAS (United Kingdom Accreditation Service) [UK] – www.ukas.com
DAkkS (Deutsche Akkreditierungsstelle GmbH) [Germany] – www.dakks.de
COFRAC (Comite Francais d'Accreditation) [France] – www.cofrac.fr
ACCREDIA (Ente Italiano di Accreditamento) [Italy] – www.accredia.it
Department of Standards Malaysia (Standards Malaysia) – <http://www.jsm.gov.my>
KAN (Komite Akreditasi Nasional) [Indonesia] – <http://kan.or.id>
KAB (Korea Accreditation Board) - <http://www.kab.or.kr>

Some countries, such as the U.S.A. and Japan, have more than one AB but most have only one. *The national government of each member state of the EU (European Union) and EFTA (European Free Trade Association) must designate one organisation as their national AB.*

Role of an Accreditation Body

An AB must operate and perform **Accreditation** in accordance with the following standard.

ISO/IEC 17011

A member AB of ILAC assesses a laboratory and **Accredits** it (to authorise it) to test in accordance with a standard such as the following.

ISO/IEC 17025

A member AB of IAF assesses a CAB and **Accredits** it (to authorise it) to **Certify** to a specific standard. Specifically, with respect to certification to management system standards, an AB must ensure that a CAB conforms to the following auditing standard when it performs a certification audit, to assess whether a management system conforms to one or more management system standards.

ISO/IEC 17021-1

The AB must also ensure that the CAB conforms to applicable additional supplementary standards. The following stipulate required competences of auditors for specific types of management systems.

ISO/IEC 17021-2 [Environmental Management System (EMS)]
ISO/IEC 17021-3 [Quality Management System (QMS)]
ISO/IEC TS 17021-6 [Business Continuity Management System (BCMS)]
ISO/IEC TS 17021-9 [Anti-Bribery Management System (ABMS)]
ISO/IEC TS 17021-10 [Occupational Health and Safety Management System (OHSMS)]

Additionally, the IAF specifies the duration of audits for certification of a QMS (to ISO 9001), an EMS (to ISO 14001) and an OHSMS (to ISO 45001) in Mandatory Document MD5.

https://iaf.nu/en/iaf-documents/?cat_id=7

https://iaf.nu/iaf_system/uploads/documents/IAF_MD5_Issue_4_Version_3_14062023.pdf

For certification to ISO/IEC 27001 the following standard stipulates audit requirements including required competences of auditors and durations of audits etc.

ISO/IEC 27006 [Information Security Management System (ISMS)]

Regional Associations (of Accreditation Bodies)

ABs are full or associate members of one or more of the following regional associations.

- EA (European co-operation for Accreditation) – www.european-accreditation.org
- IAAC (Inter American Accreditation Cooperation) – www.iaac.org.mx
- APAC (Asia Pacific Accreditation Cooperation) – <https://www.apac-accreditation.org>
- ARAC (Arab Accreditation Cooperation) – <http://arac-accreditation.org>
- AFRAC (African Accreditation Cooperation) – www.intra-frac.com
- SADCA (Southern African Development Community Cooperation in Accreditation) – www.sadca.org

NOTE The members of EA (European co-operation for Accreditation) include the designated ABs of the EU (European Union) and EFTA (European Free Trade Association).

The regional associations fulfil an important role. They manage the scope of accreditation of their member ABs. Each association operates a Multi-Lateral Recognition Agreement (MLA or MRA) and a peer review system, whereby some member ABs of the association periodically assess each member AB to determine if it has achieved or maintained the ability and competence to accredit organisations, in accordance with ISO/IEC 17011, to one or more accreditation standards, such as the following.

- ISO/IEC 17021-1
- ISO/IEC 17024

EA and ARAC publish details on their websites both of their peer evaluation process and activity.

- <https://european-accreditation.org/mutual-recognition/peer-evaluation>
- <https://arab-accreditation.org/arac-mla/peer-evaluation-process>
- <https://arab-accreditation.org/arac-mla/peer-evaluation-activity>

If a regional association determines that an AB is competent to accredit to one or more standards, it:

- (1) Accepts the AB as a signatory to its Multi-Lateral Recognition Agreement (MLA or MRA);
- (2) Designates the scope of the standards to which the AB can accredit.

All other signatory ABs of the regional association's Multi-Lateral Recognition Agreement (MLA or MRA) then accept accreditations by that AB to those designated standards.

For example, the USA has three ABs to provide accreditation to management system standards.

- ANAB [<http://www.anab.org>] is a member of IAAC and signatory to its MLA, and it is also a member of APAC and signatory to its MRA.
- IAS [<http://www.iasonline.org>] is a member of APAC and signatory to its MRA.
- UAF [<http://uafaccreditation.org>] is member of APAC and signatory to its MRA.

IAF Recognition of Signatory Status of Regional Associations

Lastly, in this international structure, the IAF assesses the competence of each regional association to manage accreditation to individual standards and awards a signatory status to each regional association that designates its scope (of accreditation to specific standards) under the IAF MLA.

If a regional association accepts an AB as a signatory to its MLA or MRA, then the AB is also accepted as a signatory to the IAF MLA. The scope of its signatory status to the IAF MLA is limited by:

- (1) The scope of the signatory status of the regional association to the IAF MLA;

(2) The scope of the signatory status of the AB to the regional association's MLA or MRA.

If a regional association accepts an AB as a signatory to its MLA or MRA, and the AB issues accreditations to (certify to) a standard, and the IAF includes that standard in the regional association's scope under the IAF MLA, then the AB's accreditations to that standard, and certifications accredited by that AB, are recognised worldwide.

For example, if the IAF recognises a regional association's accreditations to certification of business continuity management systems, then accredited certifications to ISO 22301, by CABs accredited by its members ABs, are recognised and valid worldwide.

IMPORTANT Although the IAF is the pinnacle of the system of accreditation of CABs across the world, it is important to recognise that the regional associations perform the most crucial assessments that underpin the entire structure.

NOTE Some ABs (mostly of small countries) are NOT members of the IAF. (Membership is not mandatory.) If an AB is accepted as a signatory to a regional association's MLA or MRA, to accredit to specific standards; the AB's accreditations to those standards are mutually accepted by other signatories to the regional association's MLA or MRA. The AB's accreditations are likely to be accepted as valid by other organisations.

Accreditation Legislation

Accreditation may be subject to legislation.

EU (European Union) and EFTA (European Free Trade Association)

The EU and EFTA recognise accreditation as important to the operation of their trade agreement. The following regulation governs accreditation (relating to products) and applies in the EU and EFTA.

EU Regulation (EC) 765/2008

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2008:218:0030:0047:en:PDF>

Additionally, the EU and EFTA have formally appointed the EA as the body responsible for the European accreditation infrastructure, in accordance with the above regulation.

UK

The following regulation governs accreditation (relating to services) in the UK.

2009 No 3155 - Market Standards - Accreditation of Services - The Accreditation Regulations 2009

http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2009/3155/pdfs/uksi_20093155_en.pdf

The role of accreditation in the UK is further reinforced by the following.

UK Government Policy on Conformity Assessment and Accreditation

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/conformity-assessment-and-accreditation-policy-the-uks-quality-infrastructure/conformity-assessment-and-accreditation-policy-in-the-uk>

Memorandum of Understanding between the UK Government and UKAS

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/278807/bis-14-596-memorandum-of-understanding-bis-ukas.pdf